



To: Business Co-ordination Board

From: Chief Constable

Date: 30th April 2020

CONSTABULARY RESPONSE TO COVID 19

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide an update to the Business Coordination Board (“the Board”) on the Constabulary’s response to the Covid19 coronavirus to date, both as a stand-alone organisation and as active partner in Local Resilience Forum (LRF) multi-agency arrangements.
- 1.2 In particular, the paper responds to questions posed directly by the BCB in relation to the pandemic:
- Constabulary response to the demands placed by the Covid-19 emergency
 - Countywide partnership arrangements
 - Use of Powers
 - Operational Capability, service provision to the public
 - Strategic Risks Emerging and Support Required

2.0 Key Updates

- 2.1 Constabulary response to the demands placed on by the Covid-19 emergency
- 2.1.1 The Constabulary is in its seventh week of internal response to Covid19, having been early to formalise a bespoke command structure. This supplements existing arrangements and have proven to be very beneficial.
- 2.1.2 The response is led by DCS Chris Mead (Gold), supported by Supt Laura Hunt and Supt Robin Sissons (Silver). Appropriate internal governance, risk planning and activity to manage this unprecedented event is now well-established.
- 2.1.3 In summary, demand for policing services has reduced in terms of calls, incidents and crimes generally, in accord with the national picture. In terms of resource supply,

levels of officer and staff absence to date has been generally low; with minimal impact on service delivery. Clearly very necessary partnership activity to take a “system-wide” approach to managing the pandemic has increased significantly during the period as per 2.2.1 below.

- 2.1.4 In early contingency planning, the Constabulary set bespoke plans ready to respond to significant workforce impact and potential service delivery disruption. These have largely not been required, but remain fit-for-purpose. The Constabulary is clear as to the graduated response it will take in response to major impacts on demand and/or resource/staff supply should they arise. This has also included setting a “Mission Critical” statement, detailing the functions that will be aspired to be maintained at all cost. The introduction of any notable changes would be accompanied by clear rationale and a communications strategy.
- 2.1.5 The Constabulary has worked closely with partners in the BCH Strategic Alliance and Seven Force and national arrangements for consistency and economy in approaches, tailored to the needs of individual Forces.

2.2 Countywide partnership arrangements

- 2.2.1 Countywide partnership arrangements in response to the pandemic have been and remain strong. The Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG), Tactical Co-ordination Group (TCG) and various necessary operational sub-groups (with individual terms of reference) are now mature. Following initial SCG chair-ship by Police, a correct decision was made to transition to joint Local Authority / Health leadership, which has proven effective. The Constabulary retains chair-ship of the TCG.
- 2.2.2 In the last week, work to look at the recovery phase -both internally and as part of the LRF- have accelerated. This work will initially run concurrently with the on-going “response” phase. The Constabulary will have a Chief Officer on the LRF Recovery Co-ordination Group (RCG). The RCG will initially report into the SCG, but over time will supersede it as the strategic group once the County moves fully into a recovery phase. The RCG will operate a number of recovery subgroups, at which Police will be represented.

2.3 Use of Powers

- 2.3.1 The Constabulary was engaged at national level following the introduction of new powers in response to the pandemic and a national graduated approach of “Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce” to the use of legislation. This accords with the Chief’s strategic direction in Cambridgeshire of positive engagement and the continued delivery of patrols by local officers in communities who know and trust them.
- 2.3.2 The clement Easter weekend period saw increased levels of public congregation, but compliance was generally high. 27 Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs) were issued and one arrest for Covid19-related offences. A position of seeking compliance and ensuring civil order through the delivery of our everyday policing approach remains.

2.4 Operational Capability

- 2.4.1 To date, short-term demand challenges and acute periods of workforce absence in certain functions have been limited. Where this has occurred it has been managed effectively within the realms of business as usual. Plans remain to graduate changes in response to more chronic problems in demand or service supply, as detailed in 2.1.4

2.5 Strategic Risks

At this time there are no strategic risks requiring the immediate support of the BCB. Key matters currently being managed:

- 2.5.1 **Availability and sustainable supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – Established supply chain and daily monitoring of operational needs
- 2.5.2 **Civil disorder during unprecedented times of social restrictions, notably risks about behaviour when restrictions are amended** – An established Public Order and Public Safety (POPS) command structure is in place under the leadership of the Assistant Chief Constable. This leads the Constabulary on the operational response to this risk and is currently exercising plans on a range of permutations that could result upon the release of restrictions.
- 2.5.3 **Effective recovery planning** – In addition to the LRF RCG (see 2.2.2) this week the Constabulary is finalising plans for an Internal Recovery Group (IRG) to help manage transition to a “new normality”. The OPCC will be an important stakeholder in this work which looks at a broad range of matters under the Corporate Plan themes of People, Partnership, Resources and Transformation.
- 2.5.4 **Financial implications from managing a response to the pandemic** – The Constabulary continues to look at financial risks and opportunities during the pandemic. This is integral to the recovery planning work (above), including issues about future cost recovery where costs have been incurred in response to Covid19.
- 2.5.5 **Changes in Demand and Implications** – Daily and weekly demand reports are being generated and reviewed frequently to assess impact and opportunity. To date there has been a general decline in calls, incident and crimes, which accords with the national picture. This continues to be monitored in terms of service demand/resource supply.
- 2.5.6 **Sustaining positive engagement and support to officers and staff** – The necessary response to the pandemic has required organisational and individual adaptation. Officer and staff engagement and support has been paramount. Internal reference groups seeking feedback have been very positive about significant work undertaken so far. There is a necessity to sustain this energy and empathy as we move from response to recovery in the future.

3.0 Next Steps/Recommendations.

- 3.1. The Board are asked to note the contents of this report.